

MISSION: Organization

As summer winds to a close many families are making plans for the coming school season. With new outfits, the latest supplies, and a fresh curriculum, this is an exciting time for parents and students. And with a few simple preparations, you can keep the new school year well arranged.

Do you find items strewn about the house upon your child's arrival from school?

Cubbies aren't just for kindergarten anymore. Giving each child a designated area for backpacks, paperwork, shoes, and sports gear will simplify the clean up process and leave no doubt about where things go. And when it is time to head out the door, the kids will know right where to go for their stuff.

Back To School



Organizing Solutions
from Bed Bath & Beyond



drawer organizers



grid cubes



canvas utility totes

Are school papers cluttering up your kitchen counter? Think about relocating the kitchen junk drawer and creating a place for school papers. Many kitchen drawers are even deep enough to hold a graduated inbox system or file folders for each child. This gives the papers a place to go while dinner is being prepared, but also keeps them on hand for later. Don't forget to make yourself a folder that can hold school calendars, menus, and notices that you need to have on hand as well.

Is your child's art taking over the refrigerator? One way to keep creative mementos from getting out of hand is to provide each child with a container or portfolio for the year. When summer comes and the container is full, decide which key pieces are going to stay. Have one permanent area to store items from their school career, and then reuse your smaller container for the latest objects. If you are undecided about something, photographing your child with their project can be a good solution. Then you have a small, easily accessed record of what was a bulky, hard to store item.

Toys can be a nuisance to keep up with while kids are so busy with school and after school activities. Use open bins to make it easy to put things away. Both kids and adults are more likely to use a system if you eliminate a step (i.e. taking off a lid). Making a defined space for different tasks and activities helps to make straightening up simple. Create a homework station, reading area, and toy box. Remember, don't get overly complicated with smaller children. They think in abstracts, so giving them larger boundaries makes it easier for them to follow the system. You may not like it that the tea set is mixed in with the blocks, but if it keeps them from being scattered across the floor, that is a definite step forward! And your child is learning to put their things away.

With children who are too young to read, creating picture labels will give easy to follow directions. Involve your children by having them make a colorful drawing for the front of a bin, to decorate their folder, or to label their cubby. Name tag size stickers are often ideal for homemade labeling, as they are big enough to draw on and sticky enough to adhere to just about anything.

Try a few of these tips to simplify your life and have a great school year!

[Contributed by Adriel McIntyre, Professional Organizer, An Orderly Manor]